

MASTER PLAN	for the	Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood	

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHARACTER AND DESIGN

Chapter Eight: CHARACTER AND DESIGN

Goal: Preservation and enhancement of the small town character and traditional design features in neighborhood buildings.

Background

The Marcy-Holmes neighborhood has a small town character of narrow, tree lined streets, two and a half story older houses and apartment buildings, and traditional neighborhood business districts in Dinkytown and along Central Avenue.

Residents expressed strong feelings of approval for the character of the area and its preservation.

Objectives for Character and Design

- Small Town/Neighborhood Character
- Visual Appearance

Small Town/Neighborhood Character

Objective: Preservation of the small town feel of the neighborhood.

Policies:

1. The neighborhood is generally opposed to the following actions that would hurt the preservation of the small town character of the neighborhood:
 - New construction, generally. Rehabilitation is strongly encouraged over demolition and rebuilding.
 - Construction that is too big for a site. This means new buildings that are out of scale and proportion with existing buildings. They may be taller, have straight facades that ignore the architectural rhythm created by existing buildings, or occupy most of the site because of underground parking.
 - Growth of the U of M student enrollment without the construction of new on-campus housing to satisfy those enrollment increases. The area between 14th and 15th Avenues can be used for campus housing. No other University expansion should occur in the neighborhood.
 - Industrial blight.

2. The neighborhood is in favor of the following actions to enhance the character of the area:
 - More access to the river.
 - Building the “missing link” in the Minneapolis Parkway system. The missing link is the connection from Main Street that rises over the railroad tracks behind the steam plant and connects with the river road extension by Peik Hall.
 - New developments that are architecturally sensitive to the character of the neighborhood. See visual appearance policies below.
3. Key landscapes or cultural landscapes such as Dinkytown, the fraternity and sorority areas, and the riverfront should be preserved.
4. The neighborhood is opposed to actions that would tend to destroy cultural landscapes. These include:
 - The transformation of neighborhood streets into arterial streets that merely carry a lot of traffic.
 - Neglecting the street trees and greenery in the neighborhood.
 - Development of apartment buildings that are located in the single family core of the neighborhood.

- Developments that are inconsistent with the design guidelines in this plan
- Large scale (large footprint) buildings or buildings taller than four (4) stories in Dinkytown that conflict with the existing character of the area.

Visual Appearance

Objective: A better visual appearance of the neighborhood.

Policies:

1. The neighborhood supports general design guidelines designed to communicate a desired level of quality for apartment buildings. These design guidelines are to be used by the neighborhood to evaluate, approve, and suggest revisions to proposed projects within the neighborhood. The following design characteristics should be reviewed according to the appropriate design guidelines:
 - Site Design
 - Landscaping
 - Building Materials
 - Rooflines
 - Ground Level Treatment
 - Building Height and Massing

Multi-Family Design Guidelines

SITE DESIGN

- Place buildings to preserve cohesive street character
- Preserve or re-establish the street grid
- Place landscaped parking lots behind buildings



LANDSCAPING

- Use a combination of shrubs, perennials, and overstory and ornamental trees
- Include open space within building complexes
- Encourage indoor/outdoor living
- Accentuate, rather than screen, buildings



Multi-Family Design Guidelines

BUILDING MATERIALS

- Use high quality primary materials: brick, stucco, stone, decorative masonry
- Include complementary accent materials: stone, metal, glass, brick



ROOFLINES

- Use varied rooflines, especially on long buildings
- Step back or accent rooflines to create visual interest



Multi-Family Design Guidelines

GROUND LEVEL TREATMENT

- Place buildings close to pedestrian ways
- Accentuate entries and ground floor with complementary design
- Consider ground floor retail opportunities
- Use ramps, stairs, and other grade separation techniques to distinguish between public and private space



BUILDING MASSING

- Buildings should not appear as high-rise structures
- Long building facades should be broken up with green spaces, balconies, parking courts, pathways, or changes in material and design



Visual Appearance (continued)

2. The neighborhood is opposed to the following design features in apartments or other buildings that are particularly troublesome and supports zoning code changes to bar their use:
 - Blank first floors caused by an under-building parking garage.
 - Long, straight, unembellished facades such as those on the Mueller building on 14th Avenue near 6th Street.
 - Front yard setbacks that are unusable by the tenants.
 - Inadequate number of windows.
 - Lack of landscaping – particularly gravel instead of living vegetation.
3. The neighborhood supports zoning code text changes to encourage the following design features:
 - Ornamental, pedestrian scale lighting
 - Balconies
 - Attractive windows
 - Compatible colors
 - Natural building materials
 - Taller buildings in the neighborhood between Main Street and University Avenue. Heights should gradually increase from University Avenue to Main Street. Buildings can be as tall as the Red Tile Elevator -- or about 190 feet above Main Street -- between 2nd Street and Main Street.
 - Taller buildings in the area bounded by Fifth Street, 15th Avenue, the railroad tracks, and 14th Avenue. The heights of buildings in this corridor should not exceed 10 stories.

Figure 8-1: NEIGHBORHOOD HEIGHT LIMITS

